

1826
S O M E
REMARKABLE PASSAGES

IN THE LIFE OF
WILLIAM HOWARD,
WHO DIED AT NORTH FERRIBY,
IN THE COUNTY OF THE TOWN OF
KINGSTON UPON HULL,

MARCH 2, 1784.

By J. MILNER, A.M. *7*
MASTER OF THE GRAMMAR-SCHOOL OF KINGSTON UPON HULL.

Y O R K:

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REMARKABLE PASSAGES

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WILLIAM HOWARD

WHO DIED AT NORTH LEBANESE.

IN THE COUNTY OF THE TOWN OF



ИЗДАНИЕ

1784. 2. H. C. H.

DAVID L. MILES, A.M.

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Y O E K:

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TO THE
PARISHIONERS
OF
NORTH FERRIBY,

In the County of YORK.

THE office of pastor, in which I have now for some years stood related to you, intitles you to a particular share of spiritual regard and attention from me. I fear, indeed, the nature of this relation, and the duties which reciprocally flow from it, are, by no means so much considered as they ought to be, in an age which seems to pride itself in the most licentious scepticism, both in principle and practice. The folly, however, of the times cannot alter the real nature of things, as they are in the sight of that God, before whom both you and I must shortly appear, and give an account of our behaviour in this relation. Whether I have faithfully instructed and warned you or not, and whether you have received the word of God in truth and in the love of it, will then be made evident in the view of men and of angels. It is my hearty prayer to God, that we may meet at the tribunal of Christ "with joy, and not with grief." Some of you have, I trust, found the doctrine, which I have preached among you, through grace to "be the power of God unto salvation." I cannot say, indeed, that I have laid before you any thing new; for what you have heard inculcated for many years, is certainly nothing else than the real doctrine of the Church of England established at the reformation; and it must be observed, that no other was generally heard from the pulpit in the times of Elizabeth and James I. The spirit of innovation crept in afterwards, and gradually introduced a novel divinity, which has too much supplanted the gospel of Christ in our Church. But it is remarkable, that no operations of God's Holy Spirit, no sensible moral alteration in sinners, no evidently good effects have appeared to attend the new mode of preaching; while that which I seriously apprehend to be the true Gospel of Christ, is mighty indeed in operation, and testifies, by its beneficial consequences, that its Author is Divine,

One very remarkable instance of this, it is the business of the following sheets to lay before you. The subject of it was well known among you. Your village was the scene of the great work of God here described, and to yourselves I can appeal for the truth of many things which are advanced. It is my serious prayer, that you may not be of the number of those who "regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands." When God manifests himself particularly in any of his works of grace and providence, it is the duty of his creatures to attend and receive instruction. And if others may be desired to lend an ear, much more may you, who saw as it were the Lord's workmanship in the case before us. You knew the person once involved in wickedness and folly; you saw also the solid and lasting change which ensued. The circumstances of his conversion point out a divine hand; and the agreement of the whole with the doctrine which you hear delivered, deserves your deepest attention.

I shall make no apology for the imperfections and inaccuracies which may attend this little piece: It is not written for fame, but for use, by one whose employments and infirmities leave him not that leisure for correction, which might otherwise be wished. I would to God, both you and I may be ever seriously employed in the *correction* of the heart, by the grace of the Gospel, and the discipline of the Divine Spirit! To his effectual agency I recommend your souls, and am

Your affectionate Pastor,

J. MILNER.



Some remarkable PASSAGES in the LIFE of
Mr. WILLIAM HOWARD.

CHAPTER I.

His CONVERSION, written by himself.

THOUGH the lives of good men, who have passed through life without any remarkable interpositions of Divine Providence and Grace, seem not to claim the public attention, nor are likely much to affect any of mankind, but those few individuals, whom friendship or relation have peculiarly interested in all their concerns, yet when God has been pleased, in an eminent way, to hold out some as lights in the world, and to display his arm in a very visible and extraordinary manner, it seems a sort of Atheistic profaneness to pass by such scenes in silence. There may have been others as pious, as wise, as dear to God; but certainly their story is not so instructive to others. That *Divine Wisdom* which appointed these circumstances of notoriety, ought to be thankfully adored, as meaning to convey some useful lessons to mankind. And it is in humble subserviency to such gracious designs of Providence, that some remarkable passages in the life of William Howard are offered to the public. "But who is this William Howard? we never so much as heard of his name. By what did he distinguish himself in the history of mankind?" I confess he is an obscure character, and with respect to political and social life, I have no desire but that he remain so. I know no battles that he fought, no kingdoms that he subdued, no schemes of policy that he invented. You will own with me also, that it had been well for mankind, if many illustrious villains from Julius Cæsar down to Nadir Shah, had walked in the same scenes of obscurity. It ever argues a meanness of taste to admire only characters, which have in them something that is splendid and turbulent. Let me intreat the reader to guard against this weak prejudice, which steals insensibly on the mind before it is aware. The life of Col. Gardiner, written by Dr. Doddridge, was indeed attended with a double advantage, the dignity, public life, and glorious death of the Hero, and also the established reputation of the author. Neither of these advantages are possessed in the present case. There is however something so peculiarly useful in such cases, that I venture to solicit the attention of the public, though they never

ver heard of the person before. His conversion was very similar to that of Col. Gardiner, not quite so striking in some circumstances, but I think equally solid. In both, indeed, the hand of God was very conspicuous. The publication of the former has evidently been beneficial to mankind; and whoever has considered the dreadful inattention to divine things, and sceptical contempt of the operations of Divine Grace, which prevail at this day, will own the seasonableness of bringing into public view a case so remarkable as this which is going to engage the attention of the reader.

There is another common prejudice, on which it may not be amiss to say a few words. Whatever may be the cause, so it is, if a man is held out to view as a person of piety, the polite part of mankind immediately, as it were by a sort of association of ideas, connect with this the notion of some weakness of understanding. And some readers already, I fear, present Mr. Howard to their imagination in this light. It is, I am confident, as absurd an association of ideas, as any of those which Mr. Locke exposes in his chapter on the subject in his Essay on Human Understanding; too absurd, indeed, to merit a serious or regular confutation. All that it proves is, the prodigious progress which vice and infidelity have made in our times. With respect to Mr. Howard, I do not exhibit him as an extraordinary genius. That he was, however, a person of sufficient solidity of understanding, and intirely free from a gloomy or an enthusiastic spirit, the account given by himself will abundantly prove to every unprejudiced mind. In short, after an intimate acquaintance with him for some years, I cannot see any thing in his understanding, temper, or constitution, that could have the least influence in the production of those extraordinary religious scenes which I undertake to disclose.

In consequence of my hinting to him the utility of such a publication, he drew up himself a narrative, which he put into my hands. There were very just reasons for delaying its appearance, while he was alive, in which we both acquiesced. At the same time he left to me the revisal and correction of the piece, and submitted the direction of the whole to my judgment. I shall at present then withdraw, desiring the reader to hear him speak for himself, after assuring him, first, that I make no alterations, but such as relate to orthography, or things of the like nature: For it is not my intention to recommend this person as a scholar, but as a christian; and, secondly, that I make no suppressions, but of things which I thought no way material, among which the omission of a very partial effusion

fusion of his friendship towards myself, will, I hope, be excused. But the work of God upon his soul is communicated with religious exactness, according to his own simple narrative.

I Had my descent from parents of the Church of England, and was born in Westmeath, in the Kingdom of Ireland, in the year 1721. My father died in my seventh year, at the good old age of seventy. He was a reputable farmer, a person of great modesty, temperance, decency of conduct, and the strictest honesty. Though he gave abundantly to the poor, his substance increased. The Lord prospered him in his undertakings; he took great pains to bring up his children in the fear of God, bestowing on us, what in his eyes at least was, a liberal education.

Alas! neither his care nor his example had the desired effect on me. To lie and to swear were lessons I had but too great a docility in acquiring; my heart burnt with the fire of lust, before I reached my sixteenth year, nor did I omit any opportunity of gratifying it, which, if I could hide from man, I was satisfied, seldom considering that God's all-seeing eye was upon me; yet my conscience, at times, rebuked me severely, in so much that I resolved that, when I married, I would give up that sinful practice, well knowing that it was contrary to the command of God. In the mean-time, however, I made no efforts to controul my passions, but cherished them with all my might; so early (with shame be it spoken) was I the slave of sin, a servant of Satan, and a rebel against the blessed God.

In 1741 I married the only daughter of a wealthy Tallow-Chandler and Soap-Boiler, in the town of Drogheda, lived with my father-in-law to his death, learnt his business, and, in right of my wife, became heir to his fortune. But my purpose of living in chastity in the married state soon vanished; my lustful desires overpowered my resolutions; my heart became more callous as I advanced in years, and my remorse lessened.

My wife died in 1745, and within two years I married again an heiress as before, by whom I obtained a considerable fortune, which enabled me to enlarge the sphere of my business, which I now carried on with great success.

In 1755 I was sworn in Mayor of Drogheda. I now indulged in riotous excesses, which brought on that punishment, which Providence has, in the natural course of things, connected with intemperance. Before the year of my magistracy was expired, I was seized with a violent fit of the gout, and remained

mained three months in the utmost torture. My irreligious situation left me no resources in God; my impatience was uncontrollable; I often wished myself dead; but the God of all mercy was deaf to my wicked prayers, and restored me to health. I knew not then how to admire the riches of his goodness and forbearance, and had no idea of that unutterable kindness for which he had reserved me.

When my anguish in some measure abated, my conscience severely rebuked me for continuing in sin and rebellion against a merciful God. I determined, (but, alas! in my own strength) to lead a new life, and never more to offend. The consequence was what might be expected, where there is no other dependance but on the arm of flesh. As soon as health and strength permitted, I brake through all my resolutions, and ran to my darling vice, "like the dog to his vomit." "Can the Æthiopian change his skin, or the Leopard his spots, then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil,"* where no power but that of mere nature is concerned.

I went on in a continual hurry of business, all appearance of religion ceased, public and private worship were both neglected entirely; worldly business and sensual gratifications by turns engrossed me; and the bountiful giver of all good things was never mentioned, except in blasphemy and profaneness. What blessing could indeed attend a life spent in the service of sin, and in rebellion again the Most High? Surely nothing but his tender mercy could save so vile a wretch from total perdition.

He now proceeds to give a distinct account of his commercial concerns and engagements. A man so deeply immersed in wickedness, could not be supposed to be very prudent in his affairs. It is not therefore with any design to abate the edge of censure against him, that I omit the whole narrative, but because the account seems no way interesting to the public. But he goes on:

After my failure, in November 1770, my heart, still unhumbled under the mighty hand of God, remained under the power of sin, amidst all the variegated scenes of flight, exile, and distress. In London I found a new world overspread with allurements to captivate my soul, and my conduct was, as before, equally foolish and wicked. There is, however, such a thing as satiety in vice, even where the real love of it is not at all diminished. This was my case.—The large draughts of sin and folly, which I had taken in the metropolis, occasioned it. I felt a wish to retire to some remote corner of England, where

* Jer. xlii. 23.

where I might live at a cheap rate, and safe from my creditors. A generous friend providentially supplied me, at a time that I was involved in the deepest distress, and enabled me to put this scheme into execution.

I left London about the middle of May, 1772, with a view to retire into Yorkshire. In this journey I reached the Humber, a large river which divides Lincolnshire from Yorkshire. While I waited for the passage-boat, I observed, on the opposite side, some miles to the left, a beautiful village, standing on an eminence near the River, finely adorned with trees and stately buildings. To me it seemed an earthly paradise. Better than that it proved; for there my heaven began. I was informed that its name was Ferriby, 8 miles from Hull, several of whose opulent merchants adorned it in the manner which had so strongly feasted my sight. I felt myself, however, determined to live there, and found a public house for my reception. The village fully answered my ideas, beautiful beyond description by its delightful situation and elegant improvements, where was a church served by the Rev. Joseph Milner. He was Lecturer at the High-Church in Hull, where he resided, and taught the public Grammar-School there, and preached on the Sunday mornings at Ferriby. I went constantly to hear him, though with no other motive than that mechanical kind of habit, which disposes us to do as our neighbours. Little attention did I pay to any thing that came from his lips. His sermons seemed long and tedious. Worldly sorrow left no room with me for pious meditation. I felt myself miserable indeed, but had no idea of applying to that which alone could make me happy.

Indeed the transitory things of time and sense can make no man happy. In the time of my greatest prosperity it was with me, as with every person who is a stranger to the grace of God,

That cruel something unpossess'd,
Corrodes and leavens all the rest.

How is it possible that it should be otherwise? not all created things can fill the capacious desires of the immortal soul. No, nothing short of the Creator's love, infix'd into the soul by the operation of the Holy Ghost, can complete its felicity, and give it to experience the real good of man.

I pass'd sometime in a distressed state of mind, reflecting with bitterness on my hard fate and worldly trouble. About the beginning of August, instead of going to church on the Lord's day as usual, I sauntered by the river side, to kill time;
when

when I was suddenly seized with a violent disorder in my head, and fell down terrified, dreading I was at the eve of death, and prayed to God to spare me, which he mercifully did. In an hour's time I arrived at my lodgings, and in a few days recovered from my frightful apprehensions of a sudden death. But a violent head-ach ensued, the anguish of which, in a great measure, dissipated my worldly sorrow. I concluded that the judgment of God was upon me for neglecting public worship, which I therefore determined to omit no more.

I now paid more attention to the preacher, who, I observed, seemed to enforce his doctrine with much earnestness, and positively declared over and over again, that except a man be converted, he could not see the kingdom of God. All the conclusion I drew from such assertions, was, that "too much learning had made him mad".

On Sunday, March 28, 1773, my happiness began, though it appeared to me a day of terror indeed. However, it was the day on which "the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom," took hold of my rebel heart.

Mr. Milner preached from these words, "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves, shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation."* No sooner was the text delivered, than the word reached my heart, "quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword," inasmuch that I quaked and trembled. Woe is me! thought I, for I am undone. The vengeance of God has at last overtaken me for my numberless crimes. I was so confounded, that I knew not a word the preacher delivered after giving out his text; even that I forgot. On returning home, I begged my host to shew me the text. On looking it over, I told him, I was undone, that the words it contained condemned me to the resurrection of damnation; that instead of doing good, I had spent my whole life in doing evil. He endeavoured to comfort me, but in vain. I now began to pray from a wounded spirit, and humbled myself before God, confessing my sins, and crying out for mercy, if peradventure he would hear me. Cards, and various vanities which I before followed, appeared now so unsuitable to my condition, that I gave them up altogether. But how to be pardoned for my past sins, I knew not. They remained a heavy burthen on my soul. I retired every day to a grove at a little distance, to pray and read the

Bible.

Bible, a book I had rarely looked into for many years. I could open no part of it, but it shewed me what an hell-deserving sinner I was. This increased my affliction. I now deeply lamented my deplorable state, and wept bitterly for my sins; my rejection of my father's good counsel was as a dagger to my heart. I continued the whole week without hope, dreading that the wrath of God would cast me into hell, never thinking of a Saviour, but imagining my sins were too heinous to be forgiven. "So foolish and ignorant was I, as it were a beast before God." And so great was the anguish of my soul, that I lamented that God had spared Noah and his Family. "Oh had they also been swept away by the deluge, I had never been." "A wounded spirit who can bear?" This world was now as insipid to me, as a jest to a dying man.

The next sabbath Mr. Milner preached from the following words: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved."* He proclaimed God's most gracious pardon for the most abandoned sinner, that would forsake his sins, repent, and believe in Jesus, whose precious blood cleanseth from all sins, however heinous or numerous. *God be thanked*, I received some consolation from that discourse; hope revived, and gladness dawned within me. My prejudice, as a churchman, against those of other denominations was now so removed, that I went in the evening, for the first time, to a neighbouring village, to hear Mr. Bottomley, a dissenting minister. His discourse was as darts and arrows to my soul, though not without glimmerings of hope. I proceeded joyfully for some days, imploring God's forgiveness for the sake of Jesus, and the guidance of his holy spirit. I renounced my own righteousness, being truly sensible of my vileness, and of God's unbounded goodness in still sparing me.

Satan, enraged at my giving up all hope of my own righteousness, now cast a stumbling-block in my way, in hope of stopping my progress, by filling my mind with Atheism. I was terrified beyond expression, cold drops of sweat fell from me. I arose from prayer, and ran about the grove as one distracted, struggling, but in vain, against the blasphemous injection. I was now helpless indeed! But that God, *who is nigh to the broken-hearted*, relieved me, by fixing one of his faithful promises so powerfully in my heart, that my Atheism was

* JOHN-III. 16, 17.

was instantly burnt up as stubble. The promise was, "*seek and ye shall find*;" a promise worth more to me than all the mines of Peru, which supported me in all my subsequent trials. I was soon composed enough to renew my supplications, and to lift up my heart in thanksgiving to God for my deliverance. My soul was filled with a pleasing expectation, that by seeking the Lord, I should surely find him. And I knew distinctly, for the first time, what is meant by resting on a divine promise. I pressed forward with strong desire, labouring to see the Saviour, with the eye of faith, bleeding on his cross; and would have given the world to call him my own. And though I wavered often through the power of unbelief, yet, on the whole, I constantly fed on the promise, "*seek and ye shall find*." The SHALL of the Almighty was an *anchor* of hope to my soul, *sure* and *steadfast*, and I was enabled to conclude that he would at length appear for my relief.

The third week of my conviction the tempter made a new attack, suggesting that, as I had lived to grey hairs in the service of sin, I must, by a long course of repentance, work myself into a state of holiness, before I could be pardoned; a mistake which cost me many a sorrowful hour: For no sooner had Self set up his standard, than I felt my heart strong for the first time. Sometimes at prayer it seemed as it were a ball of iron within me. I could not now shed tears as before, which greatly distressed me: But I was not forsaken, the still, small, but powerful voice of God sounded some hours in my heart every day, drawing me with the cords of redeeming love. The spirit of God caused my soul to aspire after heavenly things, and forget worldly cares, as if I had been new-born. "How wonderful art thou, Lord, in all thy ways, how great are thy mercies to the children of men!"

I omitted no opportunity of hearing Mr. Milner and Mr. Bottomley, who often delivered the strongest gospel-encouragements, "to comfort those that mourn." Nevertheless, I was not able to lay hold of any, but that precious one which has been mentioned, and which the Lord made to be sufficient for my hour of need. They laboured likewise to describe man's fall in Adam, and our depravity of heart by nature; but this was a point of doctrine as yet hid from me. Often did I complain to God of my actual sins; but the bitter root of a sinful nature I saw not, nor was I rightly convinced of my nothingness in myself. In solitude I mourned for my sins, still hoping that God would in his good time grant me my heart's desire. In the mean-time some of my acquaintance believed I was falling into despair,

The

The sixth week of my conviction the Parish Clerk informed me, that Mr. Milner would be at his house the Saturday evening following, when I might have the opportunity of a personal interview with him. I gladly accepted the offer, and longed for the approaching time.

He received me with much affection, and said, he was glad to hear I wished to seek the Lord, and depart from evil. I related to him my distress for six weeks past, how I was awakened under his ministry, and was not without hope of divine forgiveness; that I rested on my Saviour's promise, "seek and ye shall find," and firmly believed that he could not break his word. But as I had spent my whole life in doing evil, I was confident that my pardon could only be procured on the condition of a long course of repentance.

He desired that I would truly answer him one question, remembering that I was in God's presence, from whom no secret was hid. Do you believe, said he, that God would be just, if he banished you to hell? I answered, most assuredly, if that were his pleasure, as there never lived a more infamous wretch than myself. However, I believed his judgments were mixed with mercy, otherwise I must have been in hell thirty years ago; for that my whole life had been one continued scene of transgression.

I have now, says he, great hopes that you are not far from happiness. But how is it, that you expect pardon for the merit of your repentance? Do you know your state by nature, that it is not in you, by reason of indwelling-sin, either to repent, to believe, or even to think one really good thought? You must be beholden to Divine Grace for all these things. As he understood by my answer my ignorance of the true doctrine of the FALL, he shewed me that God created Adam upright, and after his own image; that by his disobedience he forfeited the divine favour, and brought down a curse on himself and all his posterity; that hence we are all "by nature" children of wrath, earthly, sensual, devilish; that he himself was equally guilty with me, though he had never gone into those lengths of gross immorality which I had done; yet that his heart was naturally filthy, being estranged from God by the vail of darkness that covers our hearts, through the extreme corruption of nature; that all without exception remain under the power of that darkness, and under the curse of the divine law, till they experience redemption by believing in Christ, whose blood alone, and not our works, can atone for our sins, and justify us in the sight of God; for "curled is every one that conti-

"neeth not in all things written in the book of the law to do "them." Now, added he, the Holy Spirit hath convinced you what a vile sinner you are, humbled your stubborn heart to godly sorrow, and prepared you to receive God's most gracious pardon; and, as one of Christ's ministers, I will lay the divine invitation before you, that you may be reconciled to him, by accepting the pardon of all your sins, and may live the rest of your days to his glory. He then opened to me the following passage of Scripture: "Now then we are ambassadors for "Christ, as though God did beseech you by us. We pray "you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath "made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might "be made the righteousness of God in him*." I now stand in St. Paul's place, says he, and beg you to believe this invitation, and accept the pardon of all your sins, which Christ has purchased for you, and which God freely bestows on you for his sake. On my reading the invitation, my soul was humbled in the dust, and I cried out, dear sir, how can I believe that God should invite a sinful wretch like me, to be reconciled to him? He laid open to me many passages of Scripture, all tending to confirm the same thing, among others the well-known parable of the Prodigal Son, declaring that the invitation was God's own word, spoken by his servant Paul, through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; adding, that "God's "thoughts are not as man's thoughts, nor his ways as our "ways."

Notwithstanding all he said, I could not believe it to be God's invitation, but imagined it might be a mistake in the printing of his Bible, and wished to see how it was in mine. Nevertheless, I concealed my intention, and desired leave to retire a little, promising soon to return. I hastened to my lodgings, and eagerly opened the place, which contained the very same words. I fixed my eyes wishfully on the invitation a few moments. A great weakness seized me, that I could neither pray nor utter a word; I was truly helpless. Then it was that my God and Saviour manifested his strength in my weakness. Quick as lightning the Holy Ghost took possession of my heart, and filled all my faculties with heavenly delight. My tongue or pen can very faintly describe it. All the bliss I had ever enjoyed was no more like it, than midnight darkness is like the meridian sun. It was heaven indeed, something of the real nature of heaven I then enjoyed. My soul was wrapped in the embraces of the adorable Jesus. And I was so overpowered

ed with holy love, and so much lost to every thing else, that for nigh half an hour I forgot there was such a person as Mr. Milner. At length I returned, and shouted aloud that the Holy Ghost was in my heart, and that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. My Lord's never-failing promise, "seek and ye shall find," was made good to my now happy soul. Glory be to thee, O Lord my God, whose mercy and truth endureth from generation to generation, and never faileth. I spent the ensuing night in singing praises to my God and Saviour, who purchased my pardon with his blood, feasting my soul with fatness and heavenly delight; "the spirit of God witnessing with my spirit, that I was born of God, and a joint heir with Christ." How insignificant did this world, with all its grandeur appear to me, who had "Christ the hope of glory" for my everlasting treasure! I then experienced indeed the truth of the doctrine, which I had heard from the pulpit, that "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And this blessing is to be felt in happy experience. "For at that day, says our Lord, ye shall know, that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you."* I heartily wish, none, who read this, may rest satisfied without the same experience; "for if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his."† Know ye not, says St. Paul, writing to the Corinthian believers, "that ye are the temple of God, and the spirit of God dwelleth in you?"‡

Fired with zeal for the Redeemer's cause, I now felt myself disposed to warn all I met with, to repent and believe the gospel, that they might be saved, declaring what great things the Lord had done for me the worst of sinners.

I wrote an account of these things to my nephew at Dublin, giving him and the rest of my relations the best instructions I could, by which they might obtain the same precious gift. They concluded that I was beside myself, in consequence of which my nephew dispatched a friend to visit me, who on his return removed their fears, by informing them of the change which had taken place in my conversation and conduct.

In March, 1774, I went to London, and there heard various preachers of the gospel of Christ. All enlightened teachers of every denomination, I was enabled to see, are instruments in the Lord's hands *for turning sinners from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.*

After some time I returned to Dublin. My nephew and the rest of my family received me joyfully. I remained with them about

* JOHN xiv. 20. † ROM. viii. 9. ‡ 1 COR. iii. 16.

about two months in perfect privacy, judging it improper to appear to my creditors, as I had nothing to give them—I humbly beseech thee, O Lord my God, to give them the true riches!

During my short stay, I had some of my relations and acquaintance often with me. I laboured to convince them of their deplorable state by nature and practice, and to shew them the necessity of CONVERSION. Nor were my labours lost: My wife was convinced of her unworthiness, was led to true repentance, and was blessed with a sense of the love of Christ. After this she declined in health, and departed this life, having hope in her death, and entered into the joy of her Lord. She was the first ripe fruit that God was pleased to bestow on my labours. Others of them became rather uneasy, and went to hear preachers, whom before they had treated with contempt. Glory be to God, my journey to Dublin was not in vain.

I longed to hear Christ's ministers, and to assemble with his people. The Lord my God conveyed me in safety, where I enjoyed that glorious privilege, "therefore praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who pardoneth all thy sins, and healeth all thine infirmities."

CHAPTER II.

Another account of his CONVERSION.

IT has been justly observed, that the varieties and seeming contradictions, which occur in the accounts given us by the four Evangelists, are so far from weakening the evidences of Christianity, that they very much establish its credibility. The integrity of the Historians is by this circumstance effectually proved; we are sure there was no collusion, no preconcerted scheme; each writer has declared matter of fact, so far as it fell within his cognizance, or struck his imagination; and the diversity is no more than what would naturally arise in all such cases, plainly to be accounted for from circumstances, and yet fully consistent with a perfect regard to truth in all the Historians.

Such a diversity may be expected in this second account of Mr. Howard's conversion. It will not, I trust, weaken and obscure, but rather strengthen and illustrate the foregoing narrative. It is taken from a paper which I wrote some years ago,
on

on the revival of which, I thought proper, with some corrections, to give it to the public, accompanied with a few notes, which may not be unworthy the reader's attention.

Mr. Howard, in early life, was intended by his parents for the Ministry. * But as he was of a dissolute turn of mind, he soon disappointed their expectations; and, after spending some time at the University of Dublin, he grew more and more licentious and abandoned in his conduct. † He was engaged after this in various scenes of business and pleasure, till about May, 1772, having dissipated his All in London, in the worst of company, and being supplied by a friend with a small sum of money, he determined to retire to some obscure corner of the Island. Providence directed him in his wanderings to North Ferriby. Being delighted with the situation of the place, he lodged at a public house, and continued there about a year unknown to every one. He caused in the neighbourhood various speculations, but was generally supposed, as was really the case, to be a person hiding himself from his creditors. His moral conduct, however, appeared not at all reformed; he frequented every fashionable vanity, as far as he was able. He was, indeed, abstemious in the use of liquors; but this he has since owned was the effect of necessity on account of his health. In sensuality and uncleanness, he was so notorious, that few who had any regard for their characters could dare to associate with him. His conversation was particularly corrupt, and even shocking to some of those who were by no means remarkable for their purity of sentiment. During this time indeed he was pretty constant at church; but received no serious impressions, till about the end of the winter he happened to ask his landlord, what advantage the minister received for his attendance at the church to preach on the week-day once a fortnight. Being assured that this was without any emolument,

* This circumstance I had from himself, though he has omitted it in his own narrative. His friends in Yorkshire, who knew him only by the name of *Grant*, will wonder that I call him Howard. The account already given of his circumstances will enable them to see, that the change of his name was entirely prudential. Deliberate villany never made any part of his character; extreme thoughtlessness in all his days of vanity certainly did. I am confident he would gladly have paid his creditors every farthing after his conversion. But, alas! he had no means: To a candid mind I need say no more.

† May I be permitted to remark here how extremely improper the conduct of many parents is, in destining their children to the church, without the least regard to any thing but lucrative or prudential motives? How can the candidate for Holy Orders say, that he trusts he is inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, & to take upon him this office, whose motives are merely worldly, and who has never been conscious of any influences of the spirit of God at all?

§ See the ordination-service of the Church of England.

emolument, he was struck in the following manner. " This cannot proceed from the man's own fancy, nor would the devil instigate him to such practices, it must be the work of a good spirit. I have hitherto been used to despise him as crazy, but I will attend and endeavour to understand him, the next time." He did attend accordingly, but his thoughts were diverted, and no effect ensued. The next Sabbath however was the time, when it pleased God to send the arrows of conviction into his soul. The subject of the discourse was the last judgment. He heard for himself, and was so affected, that the scene appeared to be realized before him. In the distress which was now brought upon him, he could not conceal from others his emotions, and that night he was unable to sleep through fear. For six weeks after this he laboured, prayed, read, meditated, and was all alive for eternity. The country all around was astonished at the outward change, which had passed upon him. He gave up all his former gross practices, could no longer bear vain company,* and affected solitude and retirement.

At the the end of six weeks he made his case known to me in the presence of several others. The emotions of his soul on this occasion were past all description. His words gave very strong ideas, but his looks and gestures much stronger. His abhorrence of himself for sin was very remarkable. He would have described the particular sins of which he had been guilty, but I thought it proper to prevent him. I never heard any one express more vehement longings for the grace of Almighty God, than he expressed himself. He declared, that neither loss of money, nor of character, nor of any thing else, affected him in the least. He said he saw from the Scriptures, that he who believeth in Jesus, hath everlasting life: But then he thought he must repent first, and get his heart softened; that notwithstanding he had laboured for softness of heart, *his* was more flinty than any one's; that he had been so vile, he feared God would not hear him; that he had formerly, in a dangerous illness, made a strong resolution † to be good, but was so far from keeping it, that he had grown more hardened than before; that he had now reformed indeed from his gross practices

* I remember one remarkable instance of this, which he informed me of. Expecting one day a number of his vicious acquaintance to meet at the village, he retired from home, and spent the whole day abroad, on purpose to avoid them.

† I fear very many have no other plan for obtaining goodness, but this of *resolving*. The plan of *believing* is sure to succeed, though with difficulty understood. Matter of fact, however, shews the good success of the one, and the ill success of the other.

practices, but was certain a change of heart was necessary; and till he obtained that, all his outward reformation would signify nothing. To love God heartily was what he aimed at, but was at a loss how to obtain it. These and many other affecting things he uttered with many tears, and with a pathos beyond expression. I could not but remark in him, as in all who turn to God, a very strong propensity to self-worthiness. I endeavoured to fix his thoughts on the free love of God in Christ to sinners; and it was with difficulty I could engage his attention to this, so much was he taken up with thoughts concerning the acquisition of love to God, in order to procure his favour. It pleased God at length to give me the liberty of uttering, and him the spirit of attention to the latter end of 2 COR. v. I represented to him the source of all his sinful practices in the corruption of his nature, and endeavoured to lay before him God in Christ, as beautifully described in that passage, and in a solemn manner, in the name of God, invited him to be reconciled to God, since it appeared to me that both God and he were desirous of being reconciled to each other; God from his own book, and he from his words and behaviour. He left me for a little time to pause in reading the chapter twice over by himself. On his return how amazed were we to find the sudden alteration. He said he had now attained that particular softness* of heart, and love to
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* This is a delicate point in practical religion, and far less understood even by many godly persons than it deserves. It is evident Mr. Howard had already been regenerated, softened, humbled, or by whatever other term the new heart may be expressed: But as he was destitute of divine consolation, and as even the most holy do ever see more reason to be ashamed that they have attained so little, than to be pleased that they have attained so much, it was no wonder that he complained how hard his heart was. Indeed the very beginning of an "heart of flesh," and of the removal of the "stony heart," (to use Ezekiel's expressions) will naturally evidence itself in such complaints. The man does love God, but how can he know that he does? The sense of guilt, and the irritating condemnation of the law, ROM. vii. 5. will render him extremely susceptible of temptations to blasphemy, despair, and enmity against God, even while he condemns himself, hates all sin, and approves of the holy law of God. The new nature is fettered evidently, and cannot exert in a sensible manner its genuine powers, till the conscience be pacified, and the fear of damnation be removed. This is brought about purely by the Gospel. Let him understand, that God freely forgives sin, and that he has only to wash in the blood of Christ, and be clean, to fear not, only to believe, and the more sensible removal of his hardness of heart will take place, together with the removal of his slavish fear. The imprisoned new nature will expand herself in liberal effusions of love; the man will be sensible both that God loves him, and that he loves God, and a degree of ingenuous humiliation before unknown will be felt. EZEKIEL xvi. 63. This was the happy consequence of Mr. Howard's being enabled in simplicity to believe the gospel report. He had evidently, as the reader may understand by comparing his account with mine,
been

God, which he had wanted, that it was the view of God in Christ, which had given it him. He was sure that the Holy Ghost had revealed the redeeming love of Christ to his soul; that he was now happy every limb; that he had been on a wrong scent, and never saw the way till now. The fear of wrath being now quite gone, he loved God more than he could express. I must, says he, be a vile dog indeed, if I do not now love God. It seems as if God and I was perfectly reconciled.

During this scene, the story of the woman in the seventh chapter of St. Luke, who had been forgiven much, being mentioned, he was in such a joyful rapture, as exceeds the power of language to describe. All the graces of the new man, by turns, shewed themselves in his discourse and behaviour. I never had so strong an idea from any human description of a sweet filial fear of offending a reconciled Father, as from his conduct on this occasion. His knowledge of divine things amazed me. Not a hint could be started, but he understood and improved the thought before one had time to explain it; and many of those observations, which are usually made by sound Divines on vital religion, he now uttered with astonishing clearness, and heart-felt power.

All this was the more wonderful, as he could not be supposed to be much acquainted with religious books, and knew very little of the Bible.

He spent the evening of this same day in perusing the Epistle to the Romans. The next morning, being Sunday, he came to me, and told me how he had been filled all the night with joy. He expatiated with much clearness and strength on the doctrine of the Epistle, and told me how he had reflected in the night on the sovereign majesty of God, and in the view of it he saw the sin of self-righteousness in the most abominable light.*

He has now for several weeks past continued in the same frame of love and joy. He will not willingly talk of any subject but divine things. He is always exhorting others, and praying

been striving in a self-righteous spirit. Holy liberty is attained only by the faith of the Gospel. It is doubtless then the duty of ministers to teach all penitent sinners to appropriate the blessings of the gospel by faith *without* delay. The want of this knowledge keeps many precious souls in bondage. The danger of Antinomianism, I acknowledge, is great on the other hand; but it is better withstood in the plain way of the second chapter of St. JAMES, than by nice refinement.

* It will be proper to add here that he told me about this time, that he had been reflecting what could be the reason why God could not pardon sin without the sufferings of his Son, and that it occurred to him, that the holiness of his nature required satisfaction to be made to justice. How well do men comprehend the true meaning of the Divine Character when once taught of God!

praying for them most affectionately. He has taken private lodgings, no longer able to bear the necessary disturbance of a public house. On occasion of seeing a corpse in a grave, he declared he wished much, if it were God's will, to be in that corpse's place, that he might see his Jesus; "but, says he, "God has taken my will from me. I pray him never to let me have it again; for in that case I should go on as before." He gives all the glory where it is due, and is conscious that neither himself, nor men, nor means, but God himself hath wrought the work on his soul. He writes letters to his former companions in wickedness. In short, his whole life appears devoted to God and to his Redeemer.

He had all along been full of joy, when all on a sudden he was tempted to disbelieve the Scriptures, by an injection of an imagined contradiction in the different accounts of the two Thieves, who were crucified with our Lord. The divine wisdom, by which he was enabled to overcome this temptation, is remarkable. He felt himself perfectly helpless. * He saw that faith, and every good gift besides, is the gift of God. He went to bed in heaviness, but committed the matter to God in prayer, and endeavoured to take no notice of the suggestion. In the morning it was gone, and he recovered his wonted peace.

On the whole: If a man attempted to describe in the strongest light a picture of a real conversion, I see not how he could exceed this real, living instance of that marvellous power of the Lord, by which he raises the dead soul, and restores it to spiritual life.

The attentive reader will see, from the turn of some of the paragraphs toward the end, that this was written, when I was under fresh impressions, from the contemplation of the case, that has been exhibited. He has now seen the first bloom of this branch of the Lord's planting. He shall next, if he pleases, consider at his leisure its after-growth and variety of fruitfulness, till the rich exotic was transplanted from this unfriendly soil to its native heaven.

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CHAPTER

* The reader may remember he had the same sensation of helplessness, when he was first visited with the consolation of divine forgiveness, according to his own account. To lie, as clay in the Potter's hand, in passive submission to the Divine will, and in quiet dependance on God, not in sloth, but in resignation, is the true posture of a christian. By this way God visits his people at first, and in this way he relieves them in all future temptations, and for want of this our trials are often continued much longer than otherwise they would be. I remember he told me of a scene not unlike this, which is now relating. When he first began to read the Old Testament, he expected a feast of much consolation, instead of which he found dark, blasphemous, and gloomy thoughts to infest his mind. He recollected he had not first prayed to God for the light of his spirit. He asked forgiveness, profited by the rebuke, and afterwards read the Old Testament with benefit and pleasure.

CHAPTER III.

The Excellencies of his Character.

MR. HOWARD's residence among us after his conversion, though not constant, yet gave us large and frequent opportunities of discovering his spirit and temper. Those who rejoiced at the change, and those who were displeased, (for there were those who were displeased) had each an opportunity of observing, whether it was some transient whim which had seized his imagination, or a solid abiding alteration, which made him quite another man.

I have seldom seen a more affecting proof of human depravity, than in the language of some at the time of his conversion, that it was only a sudden fit of religion, he would soon return to his old practices. Their malignant wishes (*for their wish was father to that thought*) were, however, disappointed. He lived for years a shining exemplar of every christian virtue, and had time to give us the most convincing proofs of the solidity of his conversion. I am aware of that rant and hyperbole, which are the usual rocks of Panegyrist. I hope to avoid them in this narrative, and to say, not what a warm imagination, or the effusions of friendship may dictate, but what the severe laws of historical truth require. After all the abatements which the most suspicious critic may make to my supposed partiality, it must be allowed by every one who knew him, that his religious joy was extraordinary; that his fear of God was very exemplary; that his faith, both for things spiritual and temporal, was of the most lively nature; that his charity was uncommonly fervent and steady; that the chastity and purity of his manners were strikingly evident; and that, in genuine humility of soul, he was an edifying pattern to the church of Christ.

Yet was this fine gold not without some alloy. My design is to represent That with as much faith, fulness, and veracity, as his christian excellencies. The genuineness of the grace of God will not appear the less to those who know what man is, even in his best estate; and I have been too much disgusted with the well-meant, but extremely injudicious, narratives of too many holy men, in which you might fancy you were reading the accounts of *angelic* rather than *human* virtue, to be under much temptation of imitating the example. How different the sacred narrative!

David,

David, Solomon, and Peter are there held up to view as distinctly in their failings as in their graces : And the God of truth is seen throughout, impartial in his story, and not *giving flattering titles* to man.

I shall proceed to consider my deceased friend under the several heads that have been mentioned, advertizing the reader, that in this chapter he will see only his beauties. The shades of his character are deferred to the next, for the sake of order and clearness. Good and evil are mixed indeed in the same subject. The christian is *flesh* as well as spirit ; but they are capable of a distinct consideration.

I. That his religious joy was uncommonly great, will not appear surprising to those who know the christian life, and who have attended to the suddenness of his change. There is no one thing that deserves severer examination, when proposed as a test of holy sincerity, than joy, because it may be conceived to spring from so many delusive causes, 'as well as from a genuine work of grace. It must, however, be allowed, that to pass at once from a state of extreme anxiety, in matters of such infinite importance, to a condition of peace and liberty, as he did, could scarce fail to be attended with the most joyful sensations of which the human mind is capable. It was in fact greater in him by far than I ever remember to have read or heard in any person, but in Col. Gardiner. If the reader is acquainted with what Dr. Doddridge has told us of his hero in that respect, he will excuse my dwelling long on this article. In strength and purity, in fervour and continuance, their joy was much of the same kind ; and I can conceive two reasons, one of a natural, the other of a spiritual kind, which might combine their influence in raising their joys to a pitch unknown, in appearance at least, to most of true christians. They were both of very warm sanguine complexions, which would give every advantage to the display of their happy sensations ; and as both had idolized the creature before their conversion in the most abandoned sensuality of practice, the God of all grace might love to shew them that ineffable sweetness in the Creator, which they had preposterously sought for in the creature, to keep them more firmly dependant on himself for true bliss, and to prevent their returning to folly.

Mr. Howard for a number of years, till towards the eve of his life, lived in a state of joyful communion with his God. Not a day passed, as he told me, without some exquisite tastes of heavenly bliss. He could scarce dress himself in a morning with sufficient haste ; so eager was he to pour out his soul in
 thanksgiving

thanksgiving to him, whom his soul loved. His delight in public worship was, I am well assured, little less than rapture; his whole soul was exerted in it. His assurance of divine favour continued unclouded and vigorous, long after the first impressions of novelty were gone off. His love of God, in his word and in his providence, appeared to be the result of a new taste and spirit; and he so naturally and freely indulged it in every company and conversation, that any one might see his heart was always above, while his body was below.

That which particularly demonstrated the solidity of this joy, was the spirit of thanksgiving, with which it was accompanied. Wonder, gratitude, and love, were the constant effusions of his soul, whenever he spake of the Most High. His language was a continued series of blessing and praise, and that not in a formal manner, but with a spontaneous ease and liberal dignity of mind, as occasions and circumstances offered. I remember once walking with him in Hull, when he observed the hurry of business, and multitudes of people employed in it. He brake out into this ejaculation, O what a family has our God daily to provide for! This is one instance of that spirit, by which he was constantly influenced, and of that joy in God, which was ever breaking out in reverential admiration of the divine perfections. There is no occasion for any sincere souls to be distressed, because they are not favoured with his heights of joy; especially because the self-righteous temptations of many christians require from their gracious God a treatment of a very different nature; at the same time, if any feel their love of the world reproved by this account as the cause of preventing their religious joy, I shall think their reading of this article well repaid, especially if they be stirred up in future to seek at the throne of grace for some of those cheering manifestations of the HOLY ONE of Israel, which furnished Mr. Howard's soul with such glorious conceptions.

II. His godly fear was no less evident than his joy in the Lord. It is remarkable, that in the accounts which we have of the primitive Christians converted under St. Peter's first sermon at Jerusalem, it is said, *fear came upon every soul.** This, I apprehend, was a very distinct perception from that compunction and remorse with which they were seized at first, and which is described by their *being pricked at the heart, and saying to the Apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do?* What ever distress might attend this sensation, it was effectually removed by the joy of faith and the comfort of forgiveness, and left

* Acts xi. 43.

left only in their souls a filial reverential fear, which had no torment,* was consistent with the sincerest love, and preserved them in a state of son-like obedience. It is remarkable, that the false joys of deluded professors are known so to be, particularly from their want of this excellent principle. A forward, boisterous, intemperate assurance, mixed with a contemptuous censoriousness, and much irreverence in religious proceedings, as well as scandalous negligence in their civil deportment, has too often marked the character of some, who have *spoken great swelling words of vanity*, while they seemed to be possessed of the same joyful communion with God, which has been described in the case of Mr. Howard. No one who is possessed of a true spirit of candour, will think the worse of a genuine work of grace, because such counterfeits exist, since the whole analogy of the course of nature demonstrates such cases to be common in the world; nor indeed can the existence of such religious delusions be well accounted for, but on the supposition of the existence of genuine experience.

As this ingredient of godly fear will be allowed to be a very discriminating characteristic, it is with pleasure I can assert, that it formed a very conspicuous part of Mr. Howard's character. Amidst the overflowings of his joy, he retained a constant fear of sin, and particularly of that sin to which his pleasing situation most exposed him to, I mean spiritual presumption. His constant remembrance of what he had been, and still might be, if left to himself, had an evident tendency to temper his joy, to preserve all his affections in their due equilibrium, and to affect him with gratitude only, not with presumption, for the distinguished favours which he had received. Nothing need be added to this article, but to illustrate this temper by some of his letters.

I shall first give an extract of one dated from London, April 12, 1774.—“When I arrived here, I dreaded above all things
 “left my old acquaintance should find me out, fearing my
 “weakness and indwelling corruptions, lest they should be able
 “to seduce me by their abominable practices.—It pleased God
 “at last, that I should be no longer hid, and one who had been
 “my particular acquaintance, when in a state of nature, madness, and folly, came and hurried me with him to his house
 “in Spring-Gardens. I was quickly environed by my old
 “companions; and though I was at first much alarmed, my
 “Lord and my God soon gave me to trust with confidence in
 “his blessed promise, that “he will never leave me, nor forsake

“take me,” and has enabled me to tell them plainly of their dangerous state, and the great salvation which the Almighty God has, in his wisdom, love, and mercy, prepared for all that come to him by our blessed Lord Jesus. They are filled with wonder at the amazing change which God has brought about in *vile me*; and who can tell but it may please God that by me (though a weak instrument) he may be pleased to bring happiness to some of them? For surely he “moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform.”—I cannot conclude without telling you, how greatly my indwelling-sins perplex me, and often throw me into great fears; but blessed be my God and Saviour, who has hitherto carried me through all, and I trust he will finish the good work he has begun in me.”

In another letter, dated September 19, 1774, he says, “I have before me your very affectionate letter, which has my closest attention, an instructive lesson, under God, to keep me low and humble. How much do I need to keep constantly at the foot of my dear Redeemer’s cross.”—In this letter he acquaints me with his having been very busy in writing the account of his life and conversion, and which he commits to my perusal and amendment.

He observes in another letter, dated 20th October, 1775, “I find every day brings its cross in some degree. How sure is our Saviour’s promise, that his “yoke is easy, and his burthen light.” Blessed be his holy name! He makes it so to his poor weak helpless servant—My dear friend, think on your Son at the throne of grace, that the Lord may humble my rebellious heart, and enable me to live to the honour of his great name, in every good word and work; that I may put no confidence in an arm of flesh, but may cast all my care on my God and Saviour.”

To finish this head: How far he was from being puffed up with his spiritual attainments, and particularly from beholding himself so much more favoured than others of the Lord’s people, he shews in a letter, dated 27th June, 1776, in which, speaking of his wife’s decease, who had been through his means brought to a saving knowledge of God, he says, “she was for the most part under clouds of darkness, but now and then rays of divine light brake in upon her soul, which I am sensible is the case with many of God’s people. But O what reason have I to praise the Lord my God, that not a day has passed, since I received the spirit of adoption, without the sensible feelings of his love shining into my ravished soul. May I ever lie humbly at my adorable Redeemer’s footstool.”

I thought these extracts would illustrate the divine temper of holy fear, which reigned in his breast even amidst all the joys of the most extraordinary communion with God, and from which every well-informed mind cannot fail to reap some edifying instruction.

III. The strength and simplicity of his faith in God deserves also a distinct consideration. How this divine principle, the root and the instrument of all that deserves the name of virtue, operated in the production of his peace and joy, has been amply disclosed already. I would now consider it as a practical principle, diffusing itself over the whole of the Christian conduct, and disposing him to exercise an unreserved confidence in God, even in the most trying circumstances. It is certain, that the true secret of an happy life is, to make every thing we meet with an exercise of our dependence on the Son of God. As by faith alone the Christian is first made happy in the consciousness of divine peace and favour, so by the same principle, universally extended, he receives every good thing. While others depend on their own understandings, contrivances, and works for happiness, he only trusts the Lord for every thing, and, as he trusts, he finds the event to be. And to preserve this lowly, self-denying frame of faith, is of infinitely more consequence than to grow in doctrinal accuracy of knowledge, though this, where its ends are holy, deserves to be cultivated; for a man may contend earnestly for the faith as a system of doctrine, who is an entire stranger to the exercise of it in the heart. Did we more closely examine ourselves from time to time, "Do I rely on the Lord in this or that particular? Am I going continually out of myself, to receive out of his fulness?" we should feel more powerfully the importance of this distinction; and faith in God, the singular, but much-despised principle of a Christian, being wrought into our whole conduct, would keep us under continual impressions of the divine perfections; would endear Christ to us perpetually as a Saviour; would mortify all that self-sufficient and self-righteous pride, which is so contrary to its nature, and would be accompanied with the sincerest integrity of manners, and the most genuine exemption from the spirit of the world.

Such, I have abundant evidence for saying, was the life of Mr. Howard. He knew well the force of that scripture, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"* His calamitous and involved circumstances had, doubtless,

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amidst all the jollity of convivial intemperance, brooded over his heart, and embittered his spirits with many a deep corroding care; but after his heart had found peace in Christ, he was enabled cheerfully to leave all his affairs in the hands of a gracious Father, and he passed through such scenes of distress and perplexity, as would have saddened any heart that was unacquainted with God, in a child-like gaiety, and simple composure. He felt God was with him, his sure friend and everlasting portion. He could trust him in every exigency, and he was never disappointed. His little pittance of earthly support † was providentially continued to his death; and his experience afforded, even in temporal things, the truth of that scriptural adage, "As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee."

Once seeing a gentleman's carriage, he could not but reflect, with lively sensations of gratitude, on the blessed change which had taken place in the course of his own affections. He had been used to place happiness in scenes of worldly grandeur; he found it now *within*, and exulted in the prospect of eternal bliss, which was ever before him. I never saw any man more completely dead to the world, and more evidently demonstrating to all mankind that his affections were fixed on things above.

He suffered much in his bodily health in the latter part of his life, which gave him an opportunity of exercising the strength of his faith in God; and perhaps its sincerity in enabling him to endure afflictions, can scarce be better described than by the following extract of a letter to me, dated the 14th of May, 1782.

"I cannot express the anguish of body I have gone through since my last; racked with the gravel, loss of rest, loathing of victuals, a continual thirst, insomuch that my life was despaired of for between three and four months: But God, who is rich in mercy, has in a great measure removed my afflictions, and spared me a little longer, to lift out his praises, and enable me again to rejoice in his holy name. I was often, during my afflictions, cast down in my soul; but blessed be the God of my salvation, he refreshed me at times with the consolations of his holy spirit; and sure I am that he will never leave nor forsake me. My beloved Sir, I find myself a learner in the Lord's ways; and when my faith is tried I am weak and helpless. But the Lord is my helper, and I will not be moved." and

† The instruments of it were some of his relations in Ireland, by whose care and liberality remittances were sent to him from time to time.

"and I know he will keep me from iniquity, and preserve me to his everlasting kingdom."

IV. *Charity is the crowning grace of a Christian.* Let it not be mistaken for humanity or alms-giving, both of which may exist, in a great degree, without one grain of it. Let it be considered as synonymous with LOVE, a principle implanted in the hearts of believers only by the spirit of God, and which makes God its first object, and from him, and for his sake, descends in its exercise to his church, and to all his creatures. In this Mr. Howard seems to have had few equals. His affections were ever on the wing towards his God, equally lively and steady, and left him little inclination to converse on any subjects but those which were purely divine. In gratitude, I have never seen any thing that I know of so remarkable. You could not do him the least service, but his mind was warmed with the most thankful sensations. As he looked on me as the instrument through whom it pleased God to "turn him from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God," his affection to me was unbounded, and I hope, while I live, to reap the benefit of those prayers, which, in the benevolent effusions of his soul, he constantly poured out for me at the throne of grace. He had not indeed much opportunity to demonstrate the greatness of his charity by his actions. His increasing bodily infirmities, and his low circumstances, sufficiently account for this; and yet his whole deportment and conversation were so full of love, and in a way so evidently genuine and consistent, as to leave no doubt on the mind how strong and pure the heavenly flame burnt within. He even panted for the conversion of sinners. Without dwelling on the pains he took in this way, and the many proofs of his superior charity, which are more easily understood by those who saw and heard them, than described to others, I shall mention what now lies before me, his care for the best interests of his friends and relations.

In a letter, dated Dublin, April 3, 1778, he says, "Your very welcome letter I communicated to my few friends here, and laboured to impress on their minds the great truths therein contained, nor am I without hopes but that it will be productive of much good. One of my friends told me that there was one part of it which much affected him, namely, That an unconverted soul would find no pleasure, even if he could steal into heaven. If it was indeed true, that we should love in the next world the same things which we did here, a changed heart, he thought, was absolutely necessary for his everlasting happiness. I assured him this was really the case, and ex-

“horted him to lose no time, but humble himself before God,
“and seek this great change.”

His benevolent spirit was extremely desirous that the wonders, which God had done for his soul, might be known to those who had known only his days of wickedness and vanity. Hence, in a letter, dated September 19, 1774, he thus expresses himself: “After it shall please God that I can either
“deliver or send you the account I have carefully and truly put
“together, you will be the best judge how to proceed, as I shall
“leave it wholly to you. I am very apprehensive, as I had
“such a large acquaintance in Ireland, that they will have
“some curiosity to read my life and conversion. And as I had
“large dealings and acquaintance with Papists, many of
“*whom have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge*, I
“have kept clear from giving them any offence, but have
“stuck closely to the necessity of regeneration.” So deeply had he learnt St. Paul’s maxim, to “become all things to all
“men, that he might by all means save some.” May his prudent and tender concern for souls be blessed with some success through the channel of this publication! I shall think the contempt of many to be richly repaid by the conversion of one.

I have seldom seen more beautiful displays of the depth of humble love than those which appear in the following extracts, which I have selected from his papers. They relate to his conduct toward a brother of his, both before his conversion and after. The transactions between them deserve not the public notice; it is the spirit of humble charity in Mr. Howard occasioned by them which alone calls for our attention. Having mentioned some favours which he had received from him, he makes this reflection on his own baseness: “Such brotherly kindness ought to have endeared him to me; instead
“of this, my vile heart was filled with envy against him, for
“standing between me and our deceased brother’s fortune.”—
“When my warmth abated, I often wished to be reconciled;
“notwithstanding, I found a secret envy lurking within me,
“which I was not able to get over while I was in my natural
“state: But glory be to Jesus my Redeemer, who has pulled
“the envenomed sting of envy and eternal death out of my
“wretched soul, nailing it to his cross, and taken away the
“enmity that existed between me and my God, as well as
“between me and my neighbour, and enabled me to be heartily
“reconciled to my dear brother, and to all mankind. With
“shame I confess I treated him unworthily. May the Lord
“look down on him in mercy, and give him every needful
“blessing

" blessing in this life, and a crown of glory in the world to come."

Thus divine forgiveness, once felt in the soul, produces a true forgiveness of our fellow-creatures. I say, a *true* forgiveness. Had any one asked Mr. Howard, in his unregenerate state, Whether he did not forgive his brother—he would probably have answered in the affirmative. The light, however, with which he was afterwards favoured, convinced him of the contrary. It is to be feared that numbers, who say they forgive and love their enemies, do dreadfully deceive themselves. This evidence of grace, the real forgiveness of injuries, seems one of the peculiar marks of vital religion. It is certainly much easier to shew love to a thousand friends than to one enemy; and those professors of godliness, who feel themselves little disposed to relish the track of thought to which I would here lead them, are desired to lend a serious ear to him whom they profess to receive as their Saviour, and weigh well his words in Matthew xviii. 21, to the end, and in Luke vi. 32.

V. But his change appeared in nothing more remarkable than with respect to the virtue of chastity. His soul had doubtless been the very sink of uncleanness. Few seem to have been his equals in impurity both of word and deed. And if this his master-vice appeared so strong in his younger years, how powerful must it have been from the daily and uninterrupted accessions of strength by constant gratification, till he was fifty-two years of age. When I first knew him, this vice had not apparently received the least diminution. He was even proverbially infamous for it, and I have it in my power to produce such proof as decency forbids me to mention. Suffice it to say, that persons no way distinguished for the fear of God, but rather of a dissolute turn of mind, were astonished at the tremendous abominations of his tongue. But see and adore the change which grace made in his soul, and that not gradually, but suddenly, and as in an instant. I am tolerably clear that, from the moment of his extraordinary conviction, when the hand of God fell on him in the church of Ferriby, and certainly from the time that he found peace of conscience in Christ six weeks after, he had no more sollicitations from this quarter, at least which had any practical effect on his life and conversation. I never saw a man more pure, chaste, sober, and decent in his whole deportment. It would have been impossible for any person who had not known him before, to have suspected that he had ever lived otherwise than in the habitual practice of temperance, soberness, and chastity. If the course

course of conversation ever led him to speak of his past scenes of folly, it was always in the language of the deepest abhorrence and self-humiliation. The uncommon and uninterrupted enjoyment of the light of God's countenance dried up the streams of sinful concupiscence, and he found that sweetness of bliss at once in the Creator, as St. Augustine is said to have done in the like case, which he had sought in vain from the creature.

I know many have no idea of this way of subduing vice. It has been too commonly supposed in this kingdom, since the evangelical principles fell into discredit, that sinful habits are only to be eradicated by resolutions, and a long course of self-denial on philosophical motives and principles. It would be difficult, however, for the advocates of such doctrines to produce any proof of their success. Certain it is, that in proportion as these tenets have given the law to our pulpits, vice and immorality have abounded more and more. This is a stubborn fact, and Mr. Howard's case is far from being singular on the other side. The principles so freely depreciated as enthusiastic by the polite world, are continually speaking for their truth and excellency by their practical effects. One case I shall mention, because it is a case in point, and singularly instructive. I know a person who for years had lived a slave to sin, particularly the sin of drunkenness. So often as he resolved, so often he brake his resolutions to give up this odious vice. He heard me preach two plain discourses on the inefficacy of all resolutions made in our own strength to conquer sin. He afterwards heard me preach another discourse, recommending the way of believing on the Son of God for the conquest of our passions, without exercising any dependence on ourselves at all in the matter. The former I ventured to call the *way of resolving*, the latter the *way of believing*. Certain it is, that he has from that time been not only a sober man in general, but has also lived in the fear of God and in true holiness. The reader is desired to judge for himself then what are the true ways and methods of overcoming sin, and is entreated to regulate his judgment, not by fancy and custom, and then call himself, forsooth, a rational christian, but by the word of God, and by the attestations of experience.

I know it will be natural to object, that Mr. Howard's decline of life would, without any difficulty, bring on an abatement of his passions. But how can this consideration account for the suddenness of the change, in a person too only fifty-two years of age, with a tolerable degree of robustness of constitution, though somewhat impaired indeed by his former excesses?

cesses? For those enfeebling disorders, which brought him to the grave, came on him some time after. But admitting the whole which an objector would draw from this circumstance, the great difficulty still remains to be accounted for. How can weakness of body alter the frame of the soul? This man's mind was purified; and hence that tongue, which had ever been putting modesty to the blush by the most detestable allusions, was now perpetually uttering the praises of his Maker, and recommending whatever is virtuous and praise-worthy. We know to what the reformation of decayed rakes in general amounts—an abstinence from what they can no more practise. But their company, conversation, and delight is still where it was. But my friend's former companions know, that he shunned and abhorred their society, and could never bear it at all, except it was with a view to do them good; and the friends he naturally acquired afterwards know that in christian conversation he was a capital ornament of christian profession. So long then as I see no other cause at all adequate to the production of so extraordinary an effect, I shall conclude that it was the work of the right hand of the Most High, an instance of that regeneration in Christ Jesus, which is preached by evangelical ministers in this land, and which it is the glory of the scriptures to explain.

VI. Humility is the distinguishing mark of a christian. The proofs of this have been so strikingly exhibited already in the manner of his conversion, and under some other articles, that little seems necessary to be added here, but that he was constantly recollecting from what a *low estate* the Lord had raised him. Some shades, however, in his character might be discerned in this respect. What effects they had upon his conduct, how he was enabled to discover them afterwards, and what improvement his religious character received towards the close, when God was pleased to give the finishing hand to his workmanship, will be considered in the succeeding chapter.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER IV.

Defects of his Character.—How corrected.—His Death:

IT is certain that all the light, holiness, and spiritual joy which rests on the church of God in this vale of tears, proceeds from, and is supported entirely by, its union with her Head, the Sun of Righteousness. Beholding his glory, every member is changed into the same image. His light and glory are his own essentially; if they shine in any degree correspondent to their great Archetype, it is by reflection. Nor does he, like the natural sun, communicate only light; some portion of his own genial warmth they partake of also. The whole church may be conceived as consisting of a number of little suns, turning their faces steadily toward him, drinking in his rays perpetually, burning and shining after his example. In him indeed are no spots; all is uniformly luminous and clear; it is not so with them. The most candid observer will see a variety of blemishes interspersed.

Having then hitherto consulted the benefit of those to whom vital godliness is unknown, in considering the formation and beauty of that little luminary who is the subject of these memoirs, I shall now endeavour, with equal candour and impartiality, to examine his spots, for the benefit of those who do know the Lord.

And here I must premise, they were certainly none of them of such a nature, as in the least to render doubtful the general integrity and purity of his character: Nor were they ever of such a kind or degree, as to impede very much his progress in grace. They were such as were incident to the best of men in the best frames, perhaps, which in this world of infirmity are attainable by any. Yet defects they were, and as such deserve the more to be accurately ascertained, even from a principle of christian charity itself, because I observe, that sincere christians are apt to view them in a superficial and unimportant light. And so much easier is it to imitate evil than good, through the abounding corruption of human nature, that you shall see some professors zealous only in transcribing into their own characters the blemishes of the most upright saints. Hence evil is multiplied and spread in the church; whereas a little attention to these blemishes, as they shew themselves in good men, together with the serious use of the proper methods of correction, might check their malignant operation, and disappoint many a subtle device of the powers of darkness.

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Many Biographers, indeed, have chosen either totally to pass over such defects, or only to touch upon them in so slight a manner, that their heroes seem to have been all perfection. I confess my judgment in this matter is totally opposite to theirs, as I apprehend that the sincere christian, finding such characters so entirely different from his own, is hence discouraged rather than assisted, and naturally supposes a state of real holiness, by him at least, unattainable; whereas a faithful picture of a real saint, such as human life and not romance exhibits, would animate his hopes and encourage him to press forward for the prize of his high calling. It seems to me therefore useful to shew the whole of the character; and as this is evidently the divine method of procedure in the Scripture, all apology is superseded.

His religious defects seem to have been much of a piece with his natural complexion. He was by no means deficient in understanding, nor, so far as I can judge, had he any particular imbecility in any of the faculties of the human mind. His judgment was well formed for the purposes of common life, had he not lived so wickedly as to neglect all the maxims of prudence. His imagination was lively and copious; his elocution strong and expressive; his temper sanguine and impetuous; and he seems by nature to have been confident and presumptuous. Yet, as if it were on purpose to prevent any malignant suspicion of infidelity, that his religious joy was founded on this natural temperament, the attentive reader has observed how entirely he was deprived of all support of the animal spirits, by the most pungent distress of soul, and the most extreme dejection of mind, through the severe mercy of his God in conviction; and that it was in this state of mind, the most unfriendly of any to comfort and joy, that he was in an instant brought to the enjoyment of religious pleasures, the most seraphic on this side of heaven.

It is certain, however, that his sanguine habit, though it could not possibly contribute to the formation of his joy, might, and very probably did, considerably support and exhibit to great advantage the expressions of it which afterwards appeared. A great flow of animal spirits cannot fail to have its effect in this case; and those who have any discernment in these things, will know how to make proper allowances, without lessening their reverential idea of that Divine Spirit, whose "fruit is love, joy, peace." *

Here then my friend was peculiarly vulnerable. Here natural corruption had room to exert itself, and here the enemy of

souls could gratify his malice in some degree. He was accordingly, at times, somewhat too rash and hasty in his judgment, and somewhat too superficial in his examination of men and things. Hence he seems also to have fallen into an error very common among unexperienced christians. Finding themselves the undoubted subjects of divine illumination, they are too apt to fancy themselves to be competent judges of what by no means belongs to their province. They undertake to determine the meaning of passages of Scripture without possessing the proper requisites for the direction of their judgment, learning, meditation, and experience. Satan will gladly encourage this wrong notion of inspiration, and they do not sufficiently consider, that the divine influence does not set aside the necessity and importance of study and reflection, the subordinate use of the rational faculties, or that deference, submission, and respect which they owe to their Pastors, whose judgment and knowledge, if indeed they be servants of God, must be supposed in general to exceed theirs. There is a medium between an explicit subjection to them, and that arrogant and unsuspecting confidence, which sullies the character of too many professors in our day. My friend, though in no great degree, (for the godly fear which has been described in one of the articles of the preceeding chapter counteracted the poison) was stained with this evil. It is incredible, perhaps, but to those who have attentively considered it, how prone the human mind is to self-conceit, to overrate its attainments, to "exercise itself in great matters which are too high for it," to step out of its proper province. This is a branch of that spirit of pride, which is as it were the essence of the fall. It is this which has produced much sedition and turbulence in civil life, as well as various irregularities of conduct in the religious world, and much arrogance, uncharitableness, and supercilious asperity in both. And so subtle is this pride, that the man who is influenced by it is not at all apt to fancy he errs in this respect, even when he does so most egregiously. And while he complains under the afflicting scourges of God, he suspects this to be one of the last evils for which his God should chastize him.

I wish it were as easy to impress these thoughts on those whom they concern, as it is to prove their truth and solidity. Mr. Howard being by no means sufficiently guarded on this head, and being pushed forward by the liveliness of his imagination, learnt too little to suspect his own judgment, and became too forward and rash in censuring others. He could not, so easily as he ought, think those to have any great measure of true religion, who attained not his height of joy. Hence he did

did not for some time grow sufficiently in the knowledge of his own heart, and having been led to read controversial books, which were particularly levelled against Antinomianism, or habituated himself to the conversation of those who read them, his crude judgment, at the same time that his heart sincerely abhorred notional religion accompanied with the love of the world, hastily concluded too much against the sincerity of others, whose religious opinions tallied not with his favourite controversial authors. The consequence was, that he treated with contempt a very excellent servant of Christ, and depreciated his ministry.

His want of experience also in the religious world, would naturally, for some time, render him more accessible to these evils. For the less enlarged any one's acquaintance is with the ways of men in religion, the more disposed he is to judge of every thing in a contracted point of view. Having once conceived, that no religious experience could be found, or at least eminent, unless accompanied with such elevation of joy as that with which he was favoured, he too much suspected those whom God had led in a way different from his; and zeal, however injudiciously excited, and however devoid of humility, would be made with him too much the *all* in religion. In this situation of mind he would also be accessible to flattery, and be too much led by those who admired his attainments, and thus, though his sincerity toward God was unquestionable, he was for a time prevented from making any very useful progress in self-knowledge. His humility was rather supported by views of what he formerly *had been*, than of what he *daily was*; nor was his discernment sufficiently keen, to enter into the malignity of that indwelling-sin, which every day makes incurSIONS on the christian.

Fearful of making him a systematic partizan in religion, I never was solicitous to bring him (nor, to say truth, any one else) to my own mode of thinking, whatever it be, and however useful I may deem it; I mean in those things in which persons, equally sincere in essentials, may differ from one another. There were, however, those (as has already been hinted) who were not so cautious, and the ill effects on his temper and growth in grace have been partly pointed out. So strong indeed was his attachment to me, that nothing had been more easy than for me to have made him a convert, in some sense, to almost any thing I should recommend, provided it was not inconsistent with the general spirit of true religion. In that indeed a divine power and relish rendered him invulnerably firm. For however sceptical persons may fancy that religious

people may be led to espouse any thing by their ministers, nothing is more certain than that it is not in the power of any to cause them to reject the atonement of Christ, to depreciate the operations of the Divine Spirit, or the necessity of humbling themselves before God, of trusting his word, and of loving the Lord. This hinders not, however, but that the sincerest minds may yet be warped in some lesser things. He was now strongly prejudiced against persons of real piety, who did not agree with him altogether in sentiment; and from his case I think I may justly infer, that it is very dangerous to interfere with the spirit's work, when he is proceeding with vigour and success. If any improvement in knowledge (I still mean in things not essential) be necessary to their growth in grace, we have reason to believe that in due time they will be led into it without our officious interposition.

I mean to give no more explanation than I have done already, with respect to the particular sentiments to which I advert. On one side and on the other much folly and self-conceit have been exhibited, and that by persons truly sincere in the main; but I mean not to inflame, but to moderate the minds of Christians in these things. Let the essentials of salvation, by the grace of Christ alone through faith, and of the new birth unto righteousness, be vigorously and closely preserved, and we may safely leave men in other things to judge for themselves, not introducing them solicitously to any farther acquaintance with religious truths, till they seem disposed for it in good earnest, and capable of turning it to good practical account in godliness. The impertinent officiousness of many persons in this matter has, I am persuaded, done much hurt, and impeded the growth of more godly persons than that of my friend.

These are all, or nearly all, the defects I have observed in Mr. Howard since his conversion. Like the effervescence of strong genius, they produced some turbulent effects; yet was there something great even in the manner of their exhibition, and a candid mind might see the full current of divine faith and love, while these evils floated on the surface of his religion. Satan did his worst, and this was all he could do. It was not in his power to bring him back to the love of the world, the evil which far more commonly and more deeply wounds the minds of professors.

It seems not, however, to have been the will of God that this rich jewel should remain always, even in this life, with these flaws and defects. A severe method was made use of by his God to polish and brighten his graces, and enable him with still greater degrees of brilliancy to enter into that "rest which

" remains

"remains for the people of God." For a year or two before his death his infirmities increased apace. He felt the consequence of his former iniquities in a very excruciating degree. The gravel, the asthma, a general debility, and a complication of pains and disorders rendered life extremely burthensome, and put to the severest trial all the graces he had attained.

It was easy to see a sensible diminution of his joy. His great flow of animal spirits was exhausted. The evils and corruptions of human nature, which had lain dormant as it were, and unperceived amidst all the raptures of his communion with God, were now distinctly felt, and gave him such affliction as he had not expected ever again to experience. There were times also when he complained of the coldness and languor of his affections. The debilitated state of his body was much concerned in this. Those things which may be called accidental in religion were affected by it; what is essential and purely divine, could not: for his faith in the divine promises remained unshaken; it even grew stronger and stronger amidst his trials. It had less to do with sense, and was more simply fixed on the word of God. His humility received also a very great increase. He evidently grew less and less in his own eyes, was more and more simple, teachable, and child-like. I put into his hands a little book, Dr. Sibb's Meditations, which appeared to me very suitable to his situation. After reading it, he owned there was a time when he should not have relished at all the views and consolations which that author suggests; but now he was very glad and thankful to pick up any crumbs of comfort where he could obtain them. Those who are acquainted with Dr. Sibbs, and know his talent of administering consolation to dejected contrite spirits, will easily conceive how great an alteration had taken place in Mr. Howard's mind. Self indeed lost ground in him continually; his affections were increasingly fixed on God. He dwelt now in his mind on the throne of grace, the merciful and faithful High Priest, and the exceeding great and precious promises of the gospel, with more simplicity and steadiness than ever, and I am persuaded had a deeper and more hearty renunciation of his own righteousness, and every way lower views of himself than he had ever been possessed of.

Those who know the Lord's method of advancing his people in the divine life, will conceive the propriety and mercy even of those severe dispensations which were made instrumental to this end, and cannot fail to derive some instruction to themselves from the case here exhibited. In fact, even many true
christians

christians form very wrong ideas of growing in grace. They are apt to suppose, though their judgment may faintly contradict it, that it must be by an increase of those very sensible comforts which they at first experience, and which are but too commonly abused by many, to the purpose of spiritual pride. It is then by withdrawing these comforts, and by some well-adapted trials, conflicts, and afflictions, that the soul of the believer is carried on to higher degrees of real holiness. His feelings may tell him the contrary. But a little experience convinces him, that in this fire he loses only his dross, and that all that is genuine and solid is improved and brightened more and more, that so he may be "a vessel more fit for the Master's use, and an entrance may be administered more abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of his God and Saviour." In few cases has this been more exemplified than in that of Mr. Howard. He evidently lost those remains of self-conceit and self-sufficiency, which had somewhat stained his brightest graces. His faith was more pure and simple; his love was more solid and genuine; his patience and meekness were truly admirable, the more so, when one considers the natural impetuosity of his spirit; and he waited for his dissolution with the calmest expectation of his eternal rest. His views of divine truth were now more piercing, evangelical, and deep. Every false and frail support of comfort was gone. Health, spirits, estate, and whatever abstracted from God, may be supposed to exhilarate the human mind, were lost. He was particularly afflicted with the want of sleep. His pains and distresses were complicated, yet God was with him, and preserved him in a placid state of resignation. Low and miserable as he felt every way in himself, he was yet filled with the fulness of God; and the reality and strength of that grace, which had never forsaken him since his conversion, appeared now with superior evidence.

I have not mentioned in its proper place, that he had before all this sincerely repented of his unbecoming treatment of a valuable minister of Christ, and, through the pure flame of divine love in his soul, been led to see the folly of a controversial spirit in religion. No christian in the world could ever say more heartily, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity*." There wanted something else, however, to remedy the defects of his character, which did not consist in malice, but in self-conceit, and I trust the discerning reader has seen how it was accomplished.

What remains concerning the manner of his death shall be dispatched in few words. For the extreme languor into which

* EPHESIANS vi. 24.

which he fell deprived him of an opportunity of shewing that which, in disorders that admit of more vigorous intervals, he doubtless would have done. Finding himself rapidly decaying, he wrote to his daughter, then in Ireland, a letter which he desired might not be transmitted to her till after his decease, in which he expresses, among other things, the strongest confidence of his expectation of being soon called to his Father's house. Very soon after, he was seized with slumberings, and continued increasingly in this state till his death. Yet he gave very strong proofs where his heart was amidst all this debility. A friend of mine asking him if he had any thing to say to me, he uttered a very pathetic wish for spiritual blessings to be showered on my soul. He was observed amidst his slumberings at times to sing hymns, and a very little before his death expressed his grateful wonder that God should ever take notice of such a rebel as he was. The last time I saw him, after waiting some time in the room, while he remained insensible, he suddenly opened his eyes, and looked seemingly with some peculiar meaning at me. I told him he would soon go to Jesus; to which I heard him distinctly answer, "I hope I shall."

And a little after, he was called to his eternal rest.

CHAPTER V,

REFLECTIONS.

IT is now high time to ask the reader what he thinks of the foregoing narrative, and to desire him to reflect what is the most probable mode of accounting for the extraordinary scenes which we have reviewed. Extraordinary it must be confessed they are; and, as a rational creature was the subject of them, and they issued in a lasting moral alteration of his principles and conduct, any person who judges seriously of the importance of events, and who feels with a proper degree of regard to the good of the human species, will overlook at once the political insignificance both of the subject and of the author of these memoirs, and will own that nothing in the brilliant course of public affairs deserves half the attention.

Let us state to our minds what is certain in these transactions. Here is an human Being immersed in uncommon vice and profligacy, even to the decline of life. The force of habit has strengthened his passions in evil, by such a constant and uncontrouled course of indulgence, that, humanly speaking, his reformation is to be despaired of; the powers of conscience are,

as it were, obliterated, and nothing remains within him, that seems capable of making the least head against the abounding torrent of iniquity: Yet is this man, without any philosophical aids and reflections, suddenly, as in a moment, from a state of extreme insensibility, alarmed, awakened, changed in the whole bent of his affections, solidly and abidingly altered in his whole deportment, and lives all the remainder of his days, a course of some years, a life of the most pious regard to his maker, of the strictest chastity and temperance towards himself, and of the most genuine charity towards all mankind. Thus far plain matter of fact lies before the reader. Had the story been told of a person living in China or Japan, it might have been said by some with a sagacious sneer, that the writer had taken care to draw his narrative from a convenient distance; but the story here submitted to the reader's attention, lies within the compass of every one's means of information. I flatter myself its truth will not be disputed by any; and should any really doubt of it, I can easily supply them with abundant means of satisfying themselves.

I. The first reflection which naturally occurs here then is, what sort of doctrine, or what method was made use of in the production of so admirable a change? because, on all hands, it will be allowed, that many are in the same dreadful circumstances in point of morality, and it would be very much worth while to try the same medicines upon them.

It would be a very absurd and unreasonable method of eluding the force of this whole business to say, "there seems nothing so very strange or extraordinary in it. The man took a sudden and strong resolution to alter his life; and it was a very happy circumstance that he stuck to the resolution; and this is the whole mystery of the matter." Such careless thoughts are extremely suitable to the sceptical and superficial taste of the day. Such an answer, I remember,* was made to a person, whose moral change was no less extraordinary than that of Mr. Howard, when he had told his story to a person of some eminence in this kingdom. But surely such random observations prove nothing but the supine indifference of those who make them. No doubt all moral changes must be attended with some resolutions of the person concerned, because the will of man must necessarily be interested in them. But the difficulty is how to account for it, that a person so circumstanced should ever come to make such powerful resolutions, or to have his will so disposed. To say that he does it by his will or resolution,

* This fact I had from the person himself, who is now living, and is a very respectable Clergyman in the Metropolis.

tion, no more accounts for the change, than to say, that it will account for a man's taking a journey to such a place, that he walked with his feet thither.

The doctrines which Mr. Howard espoused, and to the force of which alone upon his heart he was ever ready to ascribe the change which took place in his whole man, were JUSTIFICATION and REGENERATION. I use these two terms for the sake of conciseness, as I see no reason why Christian Divinity, low, very low indeed, and perfectly contemptible as it appears in the eyes of polite and fashionable people at this day, should not be allowed the use of comprehensive and convenient expressions, as well as other sciences. By the doctrine of *Justification* is meant, the particular method laid down in the Scripture of honourably acquitting sinful men before their God through the atonement or righteousness of Jesus Christ, without the least regard had to their works or deservings.* On the contrary it is supposed, that the man who is to be the subject of Christian Justification, is a condemned sinner in himself, deserving only the wrath of God, and too deeply involved in guilt to be ever extricated by any merit of his own. This doctrine implies the character of the Supreme Being to be inflexibly holy and just, and makes room for the surprising display of his infinite mercy by the substitution of his only begotten Son, at once to satisfy Divine Justice, to condemn sin, and to exhibit the purest discoveries of the most unbounded goodness. The reader has seen the influence of all this on Mr. Howard's mind. His distress of soul began with these very ideas of the divine purity and justice, as signally to be displayed on the last judgment day, and his peace and comfort were at length as suddenly effected, by the discovery of the doctrine of Justification by Jesus Christ merely through faith, as above explained. Certain it is, that the great outlines of his change depended on this doctrine, scripturally understood, in connection with its just dependencies. It was no smooth harangue on the moral fitness of things, or on the native beauty of virtue, or on the dignity of human nature, or on the arbitrary mercy of God, to the exclusion of his justice and purity, that had the least concern in his moral alteration. Such schemes and views may please the taste of corrupt mankind, and many would think them far more likely to have effected the change, than a doctrine so simple, and so contrary to men's natural notions. *Deo aliter visum*. No such happy effects have ever been the consequence of such lectures; but the instances of solid benefit derived from the Christian Doctrine of Justification are innumerable.

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* Rom. iii. 22 to 27.

The other great Christian Doctrine, which he as sincerely embraced, and which he ever looked on as of vast influence in all his religious concerns, is *Regeneration*. This doctrine implies man, all men without exception, to be naturally in a state of extreme depravation, needing an entire renovation in all their affections and faculties, which change is called by Christ himself by the name of *being born again*,* a change effected solely by the spirit of God; and therefore those who are possessed of it, are said to be *born of the Spirit*. All then who boast of man's natural love of goodness and virtue, and cherish ideas of the strength of his powers to save himself, militate wholly against those doctrines which he found so useful to his soul. Indeed it so happens in experience, that the success of such pretended reformers, resembles that of noisy empirics in physic; the true lovers and genuine practitioners of genuine virtue being found only among those, whose very doctrine lays a solid foundation for humbling man, and glorifying his Maker.

Thus far then the presumption lies in favour of these two doctrines of Justification and Regeneration, that a change so confessedly great, or a *conversion* so extraordinary (will the polite reader allow me the word? I really know no other so proper) was effected, supported, and carried on entirely by the influence of these doctrines.

We may now proceed a step farther, and observe that this change cannot possibly be accounted for in any other way than by a divine influence. The doctrines which he espoused, and by the power of which alone it was effected, are certainly of so peculiar a nature, as to evidence their divine origin. That a sinner should be justified before his Maker purely by the merit of another, and in the way of believing only; that man, in order to become holy and fit for the society of his God, must be made a new creature, and be wrought upon by the divine spirit, not only without, but even against all his natural propensities; and that the dispositions which constitute the character of an holy person should be faith, hope, and love, and these too not of human, but of supernatural origin; and that the whole happiness of his life must be sustained by a mysterious union with an invisible Mediator; these are certainly such principles of religion, as are perfectly unlike any thing that ever was invented by mere man. And they are things which lie so totally out of our reach, tend so purely to the honour of God, and are so calculated to stain the pride of human merit and glory, that we may safely pronounce them purely divine; no man ever would or could have invented and propagated such

ideas;

ideas; and we all know, or may know, that mankind are naturally too much at enmity against them, ever of themselves, to receive them. Now these are the principles of the New Testament, though it is very common for persons professing to believe the New Testament to despise and abhor them. But surely they have received their religious principles from a source very different from the sacred oracles; and all the use they make of these is, by some subtle perversion to adapt some few detached texts to support a preconceived system. No man, who ever studied the Scriptures themselves with reverence and prayer, will say that he learnt from them to despise the doctrines of Justification and Regeneration.

Now a certain divine power is spoken of in the word as connected with the true preaching of it. It is said to be "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword."* Mr. Howard found it so; in the day of God's power, a single text, as we have seen, overcame his stubborn heart, and awed him into submission to the Most High. And when the effect is observed all along to have been perfectly correspondent to the descriptions given in the Scriptures, and he became abidingly holy, comfortable, and heavenly-minded, emancipated from the dominion of every sin, and truly and fervently filled with the love of God and of his neighbour, what shall we say? Have we not here a demonstration of the truth of Scripture? Does not the coincidence of what is written with what is wrought, prove that both are equally from God? It may be said, "it seems far more rational, that other kind of doctrine should be preached to men." But if matter of fact shews indeed, that no other sort of doctrine does burst the bonds of sin, and make men truly holy, should we not say with St. Paul, † the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men? What you think improbable, absurd, and foolish, is the real wisdom of God; it is your own taste that needs to be rectified, and you ought to think more modestly of your own understanding. I see not how the conclusion can be avoided, that the work of Mr. Howard's conversion was from God, and that the scripture-doctrines of Regeneration and Justification are divine.

And here one sees at first sight, how easy it is to answer the question, which with some confidence has been asked, "granting that men may be influenced by the Divine Spirit, how can men ever distinguish his influences from the emotions of their own minds?" Every instance of conversion sufficiently answers this question. The subject of it knows experimentally, that such

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holy views and tempers could never be the product of his sinful nature; and their own native power and glory shew they are from God. He who has once seen the sun in his majesty, needs no other argument to convince him, that it is not a light of his creating.

Till then some other adequate cause can be assigned for these religious phænomena, of which no age has ever been wholly destitute, it is reasonable to conclude, that "the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.*

I am aware, that a partial reformation of conduct is attainable by other methods. Socrates might justly boast, that by his philosophy he had corrected some vices of his nature. And the libidinous Polemo, by hearing Xenocrates's lectures on temperance, might from a dissolute rake be metamorphosed into a proud Philosopher. Just as the Duke of Wharton, "whose ruling passion was the lust of praise," might undergo various alterations of external character, "now a Punk, and now a "Friar." But still in all such cases the radical character remains the same. To gratify Self in some form or other, was the very heaven of Socrates, of Polemo, and of Wharton. To humble themselves before the Most High, to give glory to their Maker, to love him sincerely and supremely, and to be renewed in the spirit of their minds, of this they knew nothing; but this is the change which my friend experienced. Self lost in him all its props and supports; he was a new creature throughout; he who had always lived for Self, now lived for God. These men I have mentioned, and all who walked in their steps, whether Pagan, Philosopher, or Christian by name, are essentially distinct from this in their whole character. They may exchange one vice for another; what they part with in sensuality, is sure to be amply compensated in pride. It belongs to God's revealed religion alone, and to the power by which he applies it to the heart, to destroy the dominion of vice universally, and to make a man truly humble, wise, and happy.

III. The truth of this real influence of the Holy Spirit in producing the conversion of sinners, and the simple nature of christianity, abstracted from those circumstances of controversy and of policy that so often cloud and embarrass it, would appear in a very strong light to any one who should trace the historic progress of the gospel from age to age. It would take up a volume of some length to illustrate this, and the employment would well recompense the pains of any who should have leisure and ability sufficient for the task. Infidel malice

has

has been gratified, even to satiety, with tedious and circumstantial details of ecclesiastical history constructed on a very different plan. The intrigues and politics of Churchmen, the ambition of Popes, the superstition of Monks, the subtilty of Jesuits, the external history too of the Reformation, and the factions of various Sectaries, have been largely exposed. And though few think it worth their while to wade through the voluminous narratives of Fleury and Du Pin, yet in Mosheim's history their materials have been compressed into a narrower compass, and you see in him all that can tend to disgrace christianity reduced as it were to a point; and this is the effect with those who know not and who care not what the gospel is, to render them indifferent with respect to christianity itself, and to extol above all things the sceptical fastidiousness which, under the decent names of *moderation* and *charity*, now pervade the polite world. The excellence indeed of Mosheim's history is in most things very great, and perhaps unequalled. But as he seems himself not to have understood the nature of christianity, all, or nearly all, his narrative is spent on external things.

But there was in every century, from the Apostles' days to ours, a real church, that which deserved the name in the best sense, men who feared God and wrought righteousness, living by faith in the Son of God, and practically applying to their own hearts the peculiarities of christianity, which, I must still say, on scripture evidence, consist in *justification* and *regeneration*. The gates of hell never prevailed against this church, though always opposed. Here alone the true nature and beauty of christianity are seen. With these dwell the virtues and graces of the gospel, faith, hope, charity, patience, meekness, self-denial, and the love of heavenly things. The history of these, as they appeared in different places and circumstances, is, properly speaking, the history of the church.

But in Mosheim they are scarce at all to be found. Public and noisy transactions engage his attention throughout. "Is this christianity? (says the Infidel) Are these its fruits? What good has it done in the world?" How much more useful had it been to have been more sparing in these scenes, and to have laid open, in an impartial and ingenuous manner, the real church of Christ! This would have been properly the history of the church; the scenes which chiefly fill his book having no more to do with real christianity, than robberies and assassinations have to do with good government. Yet his pains in laying open the evils and abuses is by no means to be condemned; it has its solid uses, which would appear also to great advantage.

advantage, had the history of real christianity been given also at the same time.

For there have ever been some, who, though not many of them converted perhaps with the same remarkable circumstances that attended Mr. Howard's change of mind, have yet been converted by the same Spirit of God, and brought to the same principles and sensations; men who felt and owned themselves lost and undone sinners by nature as well as practice; men who in extremity were relieved by a divine light and aid, who found themselves comforted and refreshed with divine peace, purely through faith, by the righteousness and salvation of Jesus Christ; men who knew emphatically *why* they called him *Saviour*, and enjoyed even in this life a real communion with him in their souls, who derived from his kindness, by the force of a mysterious but powerful union, strength against sin and all sorts of evil; who lived in him spiritually, followed his example indeed in real holiness, had their conversation in heaven, and directed their ambition, in contempt of all that the world calls great, to an heavenly kingdom, contented here to be despised as fools and madmen, yet living according to every maxim of true wisdom; returning good for evil, prayers for curses, and beneficence for persecution; the real friends of mankind, new creatures indeed, and, finally, as distinct in spirit and taste from the rest of the world as light is from darkness. These are the **CHRISTIANS**; the history of these is the history of the church. Malignant opposers of the scriptures miss their mark altogether when they censure christianity, because of the wickedness of vast numbers who are called christians; for, strictly speaking, they are infidels as well as themselves; and so long as men despise the essential principles of scripture, they ought to be so esteemed, whatever they please to call themselves.

Did we accustom ourselves to view the church in this, which is its true light, we should not complain of the difficulty of finding out whom or what we are to believe amidst the endless distractions of controversy. We have only to turn away our eyes from the many scenes of mock-christianity, and steadily survey that which is genuine. For there have ever been those who have held, and felt, and practised as has been described. Setting aside also some lesser differences of opinion which they may have had among themselves, the views of the fall and of human depravity, of justification by Jesus Christ and redemption through his blood, of a life of entire dependance on him, and of those fruits of holiness which result from it are simple, uniform, clear, intelligible; the most so of any thing in the world,

world, when the mind is rightly disposed to receive the truth, and submit to it in all its energy.

This is then the way to judge of christianity. The fulfilment of the scriptures, and the divine origin of the religion itself, would hence be shewn in a light unanswerably strong.

The acts of the Apostles form a very precious beginning of this history, and have in this view been judiciously illustrated in a late publication by an able and pious divine of the church of England.* He has not prosecuted the history beyond the first century; and I confess the task, as we advance downward to the times of the Reformation, grows more arduous. It might however be done; and historical proofs are not wanting from age to age of the true church of Christ, shining as a light in the midst of a dark world. The scene shifts indeed from place to place. The spirit of God is grieved from time to time; candlesticks are removed, but still the light, which is *here* extinguished, rises *there*, and burns with triumphant glory. In vain shall we seek to confine it within the pale of certain denominations. The grace of God will not be thus fettered, and we ought to separate it in our ideas from all externals and circumstantialia whatever. For ages, even amidst the corruptions of Popery, some souls were partakers of its influence. But when the church was seemingly near a total extinction, it was revived with wonderful power at the Reformation. Even the Jansenists in France, though Papists by name, were possessed of the same holy flame which animated the breasts of pious Protestants, at the very time too that the church of England, a Protestant church by constitution, had relapsed into a contempt of the gospel. In our own times a glorious change has in her taken place; evangelical principles have been revived; they are spreading at this day with vigour and effect. May the land in general feel their force! And as the church has ever been thus preserved, so particular instances of very extraordinary exertions of the grace of God have appeared from age to age, as it were, to call up the attention of a slumbering world. The conversion of St. Paul, recorded in the ninth chapter of the Acts, is of this sort; and that of St. Augustine,† recorded by himself, is extremely remarkable. That of Col. Gardiner has been displayed by the respectable pen of Dr. Doddridge; and may not the Author of these sheets presume to offer one in some measure of the same kind to the reader's attention?

Reflections like these should have their weight with thinking minds, and are certainly calculated to make us see that there ever has been something divine in real religion which ought not

* Newton's Ecclesiastical History.

† See Theological Miscellany, No. 2.

not to be confounded with nominal christianity, which has been too rashly condemned as enthusiasm, and which deserves the most profound attention of every one who would be made wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus.

IV. There is a method not uncommonly made use of to evade the force of this whole argumentation, which, as it meets us in full opposition, though with a specious appearance of friendship, it will behove us to expose in its true light. What has been advanced concerning the doctrines of christianity, their influence, their necessity, their importance, has its truth, and must be owned by every christian. But then why such extreme censoriousness, why such contracted bigotry? The generality of the Clergy and Laity do at bottom hold the same things as those which you so vehemently insist on; only they are more moderate in their manner, and more wary in their use of these truths. They make some concessions to the world in things not very material, for the sake of doing good in things of greater consequence. It is not the doctrine, but the intemperate manner of applying it, which exposes those who call themselves evangelical, to censure and ill-will; and particularly their want of charity can never be vindicated, in supposing none to be right but those who use exactly the same language as themselves.

The sophistry of this charge deserves to be distinctly considered. And to prevent mistakes, it must be confessed that if the persons described under the last article as members of the real church of Christ, had nothing to shew for the vindication of their peculiar principles and practice but an affected discrimination from others in point of phraseology; if, in short, verbal distinctions were all they had to boast of, their conduct would be indeed indefensible. It would not only be uncharitable and bigotted, but also weak and unmanly. For what more unworthy of rational creatures, than to raise disputes among themselves on mere terms, when their ideas are the same?

But this is far from being the case in the present instance; and every candid observer, who has thought with any clearness or precision on these subjects, must see that the difference is in ideas, not in words, and is extremely momentous, even more so than language can describe.

That the religion briefly described in the last article, and peculiarly distinguished by holding out the doctrines of justification and regeneration, is essentially distinct from that of those who deny the Godhead and atonement of Jesus Christ, and the personality and influence of the Holy Ghost, will be at once allowed;

allowed; and how numerous, increasingly numerous, are these in this kingdom!

Many, however, do yet hold the doctrines of the Trinity and the atonement of Jesus Christ in a general manner, though they seem to make little use of them in practice, and do evidently lay the great stress for their hope of heaven on the performance of moral duties, and yet at the same time treat with perfect contempt all ideas of conversion or regeneration; not perhaps denying the thing itself, yet ridiculing all pretensions of any person to the experience of them in our days. If this be a true account of the state of many of the Clergy and Laity in this kingdom, one sees at first sight why they object to the *manner* of setting forth these things. They have no idea of any personal use and application of them to the heart and conscience. And how then do they differ essentially from those who deny them altogether? For what is all the doctrine in the world abstracted from its use?

Granting, however, that there are many things in which good men may safely differ, and ought to shew a spirit of mutual forbearance and moderation, certainly the doctrine of justification is not one of those subjects. If any question can be conceived to be even of infinite importance, it is this—How shall man be accepted with his Maker? We trifle only with God and our souls, while we content ourselves with a loose and general idea of Christ's atonement, and bring it to no one determinate point of utility whatever. For the question is this:—Ought I to trust *entirely* in Jesus Christ, and to renounce my own righteousness *entirely*, in order for salvation, or is it unsafe and dangerous so to do; and ought my hope of heaven to be founded partly on the merit of Christ, and partly on my own?—This is the clear state of the question as it lies between the two parties before us on the subject of justification. And is this a nominal distinction? Is it of no consequence whether man be thoroughly humbled, or allowed to glory in something of his own? Whether God and the Lamb are to have all the honour of his salvation or not? There is an essential difference of opinion here, and the difference produces a most material distinction in the whole of practical religion. The very ends and motives of duty which each party propose to themselves are widely opposite. The love of God is the grand motive of the one system, self-righteousness of the other. But surely to every real christian, whatever doubts he may have, (and he has many on religious subjects) it is no matter of doubt at all whether he be a fallen creature, dead altogether in sin by nature. It is no matter of hesitation whether he is

to seek acceptance with God by the blood of Jesus Christ, or by the works of the law. It is not a problematical subject with him, Whether he must be born again, if ever he enter into the kingdom of God; whether this new birth, with all its fruits and consequences, be wrought by the will of man, or by the Spirit of God alone; whether his good works ought of necessity to be principled by the love of God or not.

But enough has been said to shew that there is a real difference of opinion here; and those who content themselves with the forms of orthodoxy above described, may be convinced of it by the opposition which they feel in their own breasts to that view of things which I have been espousing. Let them search, however, the scriptures with honest minds, and at least cease from saying that they mean the same things as those which they oppose. For if indeed this be the case, why do they shew such aversion to these principles? Why dislike to have them set forth in the plainest manner? Why are they more cordial, and feel their own spirits to be more in unison with Socinians, Sceptics, and with any sort of persons than those whom they deem Enthusiasts? Why such ridicule and contempt of the New Birth? Why is the preaching of their system, if it be a system at all, of no weight, no influence? Is it not incredible that, if indeed their doctrine was the same, no instances of any conversion should ever happen among them? Is it not still more incredible that they should deride the very idea of conversion itself? Why are they so fearful of the cross of Christ? Why so conformable to the taste and spirit of the world? How happens it, that the people in general, who attend their ministry, are so ignorant of the first principles of christianity? I remember Mr. Howard told me that he never in all his life heard of the New Birth from any pulpit till he heard it at Ferriby; and I apprehend that many might justly make a similar remark. It were much to be wished that the truth was clearly seen in this point, because while men fancy the common, beaten, broad, fashionable road, which exposes them to no inconveniences, will lead to the same end as the narrow and difficult road, they will never leave the one for the sake of the other.

V. If the doctrines of justification and regeneration be then real scripture-doctrines, and enter into the principles of a work of divine grace on the heart; if they prove their divine origin by their own light and native energy; if they have never failed in every age of the church to be attended with undeniable seals of their divinity, in the conversion and holy lives of some;

if these alone constitute the church, and if every other sort of principles be diametrically opposite, what remains but that we betake ourselves to the study of the sacred oracles; and see what is the religion there enforced? On a fair examination we shall find that the principles which in this kingdom have been spreading for about forty years, and have been stigmatized with the opprobrious terms of Methodism or Enthusiasm, are in reality the religion of the apostles and primitive christians. And a little candid examination will convince any reasonable man that they are no other than those which the Reformers in Germany and England professed, and on which the church of England is founded. The decline has been so deep with us, and scepticism, prophaneness, and an illegitimate and unscriptural charity have been propagated in so general a manner, that the revival of these principles subjects men to the censure of introducing some strange sectarian ideas; though they contain nothing new, nothing particular, nothing different from the creed of the wisest and most intelligent christians of all ages, nor from the genuine doctrine of the church. Much pains has been taken to suppress them; persecution has been tried, but the spirit of the times, and the lenity of government have ever rendered it ineffectual. The most indecent publications on the plan of wit and raillery have been attempted, nor has the more reasonable mode of argument been neglected. Yet these principles live and flourish, and every lover of truth will rejoice to find that many of the established clergy are opening their eyes more and more, and entering into the spirit of the new testament with increasing ardour. The hand of God also has evidently been with them. Mr. Howard's case, though somewhat singular in circumstances, is by no means so in substance. "Men are turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God." Multitudes are reformed, and lead holy lives, wherever these principles prevail. I frankly avow that the recommendation of these principles was the design of this publication. Let it only be allowed that there is such a thing as a divinely revealed religion, that the knowledge and power of it are of infinite importance, and then if any one will still fastidiously refuse these principles an hearing, let him ask himself, where and among what sort of persons he can expect to find the real christian religion. If he is not quite buried in prophaneness and pride, he will scarce look for it among Arians and Socinians. What! is the spirit of God with those who degrade the essential dignity of the Saviour, or despise the operations of the Holy Ghost, or explain away the only hope

of a sinner—the atonement of the Son of God? Will he look for the christian religion among the common professors of orthodoxy? This will in our days comprehend a very large part; about forty years ago it comprehended almost the whole of the established clergy. But what signature of divine life can be traced among them? Is there not an evident want of zeal with respect to religion? not to say among many a want of any plan or system of ideas at all? Is there the least spiritual good apparent among them? Do any in hearing discourses from the pulpit ever obtain, or expect to obtain, any benefit? Can a single instance be produced in the course of twenty or thirty years of a single person reclaimed from vice in consequence of this religion?

He must then, if truly serious for his soul, look for the religion of Christ among those who, under God, have of late years been the instruments of the revival already mentioned. And may he look to good purpose! May the dawn of Gospel-light, the very best symptom of divine favour which this kingdom, amidst all its alarming evils, can boast, break out into open day! I would not despair but that even some of the Dignitaries of the church may not only view with more friendly eyes, as they lately have done, but themselves also with honest zeal espouse and support the precious peculiarities of christianity. Devoutly should we pray, that that “God, who alone worketh great marvels, would send down upon our bishops and curates, and all congregations committed to their charge, the healthful spirit of his grace!”

Let me be permitted to suggest to my brethren of the clergy, that they have taken upon them a weighty charge indeed, the feeding of precious souls, whose blood will be required at their hands, if they be found unfaithful: and that a life of mere indolence and pleasure, or spent in the pursuit of preferment and attendance on the Great, or even in the fairer and more creditable attention to matters of learning and taste, or worldly business, is by no means calculated to qualify them for the right discharge of the task which they have undertaken. “With whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness?” is a very awful enquiry, which at the last judgment-day will be made of every pastor; and it behoves us to consider what answer we can return to it. To have been useful in promoting the salvation of only a few souls, will one day be found more noble, as it is certainly a more solid achievement, than to have amassed all the treasures of learning and philosophy, the best use of which is to render them hand-maids to piety, or to have outstripped all their equals in ecclesiastical preferment.

If

If the friends and acquaintance of Mr. Howard in Ireland should happen to see these sheets, they are requested, for their own sake, to give them a serious perusal. His heart was much affected on their account, and he earnestly longed for the prosperity of their souls.

Christian believers may, I hope, find something in this narrative that may warm their hearts with heavenly zeal, and at the same time fortify their judgments on the subject of humility and godly fear. Such as it is, I commit this little publication to the divine blessing.

F I N I S,

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